



Funding Opportunity: Army Research Office Releases Long-range BAA

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – June 1, 2012

On May 31, the Army Research Office (ARO) released its long-range Broad Agency Announcement for fiscal years (FY) 2012-2017. Like other research entities within the Department of Defense (DOD), ARO periodically releases a BAA describing its research interests rather than issuing targeted solicitations on individual topics. ARO is the basic research arm of the Army Research Laboratory (ARL), which also released a new BAA this week. However, much of ARL's work is intramural, with the basic science supported by ARO representing the extramural research community's best opportunity to secure funding. Although the BAA calls for basic research, ARO emphasizes that it will only fund projects in areas with the ability to support future advances for the Army and its soldiers. ARO notes that it will not support research on specific devices or components through the BAA.

The BAA outlines ARO research interests across 10 broad categories: mechanical sciences, environmental sciences, mathematics, electronics, computing science, physics, life sciences, chemical sciences, materials science, and network science. Each research area contains information on numerous subcategories of specific interest to ARO. While the foci of many individual ARO programs are similar to previous BAAs, common themes permeate across ARO programs and directorates. Specifically, ARO is seeking to align its programs with current high-level DOD priorities including big data, advanced manufacturing, and advanced materials. Further, the BAA also emphasizes its desire to support projects with the potential to generate solutions at the nexus of multiple scientific disciplines. An enhanced emphasis on multidisciplinary research has been a hallmark of not just DOD, but most federal research agencies under the Obama Administration.

Beyond core research programs, the BAA also highlights special ARO initiatives. These include the Short-Term Innovative Research (STIR) program, which funds rapid investigations to evaluate innovative new basic research concepts; the Army Young Investigators Program (YIP), which supports outstanding young investigators in an effort to engage them in Army research; and the Research Instrumentation (RI) program, which supports the purchase of instrumentation to advance research in areas of interest to ARO. The RI program is separate from the popular Defense University Research Instrumentation Program (DRUIP) funded annually by DOD. Details of these and other special programs are available in the full BAA.

Letters of Intent: Interested applicants are encouraged to submit white papers to the appropriate technical contact before submitting a full application. White papers will be reviewed by program managers, who will decide on whether to invite full proposals. Investigators are encouraged to speak with the appropriate technical contact prior to submitting a white paper to determine whether their interests align with ARO priorities. Technical contacts for each research interest are included in the full BAA.

Due Dates: The BAA will remain open until May 31, 2017 unless ARO releases a replacement. Proposals can be submitted to ARO at any time throughout the year, with funding dependent on availability.

Total Funding and Award Size: ARO does not indicate a total dollar figure it plans to allocate through this BAA, as funding is subject to the annual appropriations process. As a point of reference, the Army

received \$436.9 million in basic research funding for FY 2012. The BAA does note that ARO anticipates making the majority of awards in three-year increments.

Eligibility and Limitations: The BAA invites degree-granting universities, nonprofit organizations, and industrial entities to apply.

Sources and Additional Background:

- The complete ARO BAA is available at http://www.arl.army.mil/www/pages/8/research/Basic_Post_version_ARO_BAA_12-R-0012KB.pdf.
- Additional information on ARO is at <http://www.arl.army.mil/www/default.cfm?page=29>.